



City of Seattle

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Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor  
**Department of Planning and Development**  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 2406620

**Applicant Name :** Martin Henry Kaplan, Architect  
for Robert Bloxom, Owner

**Address of Proposal:** 219 South Washington Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Master Use Permit for future construction of a 662 sq. ft., 3<sup>rd</sup> story addition to expand the residential unit in an existing residential and office building.

The following approval is required:

**Variance** to allow an addition resulting in a building less than 50' in height.  
(SMC 23.66.140B)

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** ☒ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or  
involving another agency with jurisdiction

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Site and Vicinity Description

The property is located on the south side of South Washington Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South. The site is zoned Pioneer Square Mixed with a height limited of 110 to 120 feet (PSM100-120). It is also located in the Pioneer Square Historic District and in the Pioneer Square Urban Center Village. The site is approximately 18.5' wide and 60' in depth and

is developed with an existing two-story building with an administrative office on the ground floor and basement with one residential unit on the second floor. The existing building occupies the entire site.

Development in the vicinity consists of mostly commercial and mixed use (commercial and residential) structures.

### Proposal Description

The applicant proposes to construct a 662 sq. ft., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor addition to the existing building in order to expand the existing residential unit from 1576 sq. ft. to 2,238 sq. ft. The project also includes a 430 sq. ft. rooftop deck. Certificate of Approval from the Department of Neighborhood will be required.

### Public Comments

No public comment letters were received during the comment period, which ended September 29, 2004.

### ANALYSIS - VARIANCE

Pursuant to SMC 23.40.020 C, variances from the provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code shall be authorized when all the facts and conditions listed below are found to exist. Analysis of the variance requested follows each statement of the required facts and conditions.

- 1. Because of unusual conditions applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, which were not created by the owner or applicant, the strict application of this Land Use Code would deprive the property of rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties in the same zone or vicinity;***

The existing site is only 1130 sq. ft. and is only 18'6" wide. The existing building envelope is extremely small and it is quite difficult to add usable floor area. Because the site is so narrow, much of the area is taken up by the stairwell(s). The property does not contain its own side walls but uses the exterior walls of the adjacent buildings for its structural envelope through agreements with the neighboring properties. Any additions to this property must be supported by the two existing sidewalls of the adjacent structures to the east and west. Since these buildings were constructed from a different time, the engineering studies suggest that the addition proposed is the maximum structural load and addition that could be added.

The original building was built as three stories but former earthquake damage necessitated the removal of the third floor years ago. Because the previous third floor had been removed longer than twelve months ago, the new third floor addition must meet the current Land Use Code.

2. ***The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief, and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located;***

The Code requires that any addition to a structure results in a structure at least 50' in height. The minimum necessary to afford relief is also the maximum allowed by certain limitations. The property does not contain its own side walls but uses the exterior walls of the adjacent buildings for its structural envelope through agreements with the neighboring properties. Any additions to this property must be supported by the two existing sidewalls of the adjacent structures to the east and west. Since these buildings were constructed from a different time, the engineering studies suggest that the addition proposed is the maximum structural load and addition that could be added. The minimum necessary to afford relief would be to allow this addition which would result in a building less than 39' in height because the adjacent buildings would not be able to support a taller addition.

3. ***The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zone or vicinity in which the subject property is located;***

The granting of this variance will be consistent with other improvements in the district. The proposal is so small that it will have little if any impact upon the surrounding area. Taller buildings abut this site to the east, west and south. The proposed addition will be set back approximately 14' from the front (north) property line and portions of the west façade will step back from the west side above the Union Gospel Mission Building.

4. ***The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code would cause undue and unnecessary hardship or practical difficulties;***

The strict application of the Land Use Code would require that the applicant add at least two more floors to the existing two story building rather than just the one story proposed. It would be structurally challenging to build higher and over the 50' minimum as required by the Code.

5. ***The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code regulations for the area.***

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) weighs heavily on the recommendations of the Pioneer Square Preservation Board and Department of Neighborhoods (DON). The Board is charged with preserving, protecting and enhancing the historic character of the District and the buildings therein, and to bring underutilized buildings to useful purpose. This building is a contributing building in the National Register Pioneer Square Historic District. The Board supports this project because it allows the building owner to realize his desire to rehabilitate and inhabit the building. The Board also is charged with encouraging residential uses in the District. The proposed addition will allow the building owner to live in the building. The Board believes that the addition of an active use in this building is beneficial to the neighborhood as that the variation of building heights contributes to the interesting streetscape character of the block. The

Pioneer Square Preservation Board issued a letter of support of this project on November 4, 2004. The letter is available in the project file.

**DECISION – VARIANCE:**

Variance from SMC 23.66.140B to allow an addition to result in a building less than 50' in height is **APPROVED.**

**CONDITIONS - VARIANCE**

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: February 10, 2005

Darlene Edwards, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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